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Friday, March 6, 2015

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March 27: Textbook list due (see [below](#))

Notes from Commissioner Gist

1. PARCC assessments: 1 million tests completed to date!

PARCC assessments are off to a great start in a number of states in the PARCC consortium, including Colorado, Maryland, New Jersey, and Ohio. Yesterday (Thursday) afternoon, PARCC passed a landmark, with 1 million tests successfully completed! I am confident that we will have a smooth transition to PARCC assessments when we begin administration in Rhode Island on March 16.

Next week I will post this item, on how we are using the 2015 PARCC assessments to set a baseline, on my Commissioner's Corner blog:

Later this month, Rhode Island students will participate in a new set of assessments in literacy and mathematics, the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments. I am confident that PARCC assessments will help us improve teaching and learning in our schools. PARCC assessments encourage students to think critically, analyze information, and explain their answers. These assessments will provide important information to parents and families about the progress their

children are making in school, they will provide teachers with information about what support their students may need, and they will provide all of us with information about whether our schools are making progress.

As we transition to these new assessments, there may be a statewide decline in proficiency rates. The last time we introduced new state assessments, for example, we saw a significant decline in proficiency rates in high-school mathematics.

Whether proficiency rates rise, decline, or remain about the same, we will not measure PARCC results against the results of our previous state assessments. The proficiency rates your child or your school achieves this year on PARCC assessments will set a new baseline or starting point. Going forward, we can use these baselines to see whether our students, our schools, and our state as a whole are making progress.

The importance and benefits of annual assessments are great, and we hope and expect that your child will participate in this process along with other Rhode Island schoolchildren.

2. Two-hour delays permitted during inclement weather

Please see this Field Memo alert on delayed openings in inclement weather, which I issued on Tuesday:

In light of the extremely inclement weather conditions adversely affecting the operations of your schools this winter and in consideration of the challenges that you are

facing in meeting the requirements of Regulations Governing the School Calendar and School Day, I am extending the maximum allowable delay of one hour for the start of school to a maximum allowable two hours. This variance as to the allowable delay period is contingent on the following:

- that, within five days of such delay, you will notify my office of any announced delay of the start of school exceeding one hour;
- that regardless of the length of the delay up to the maximum allowable two hours, your schools will fulfill the requirement of providing a minimum three hours of instructional time;
- that you are expected to develop a plan for ensuring that the minimum required three-hour school day consists of meaningful instructional time; and
- that this variance will be in effect until April 15, 2015, and that thereafter your obligations relating to the start of the school day during inclement weather will be governed by Board of Education Regulation G-4-8.

Without assurances that your schools will deliver at least three hours of instructional time on those days when a delayed start is necessitated by inclement weather conditions, those days cannot be credited as “school days” toward fulfilling the required aggregate 180-day school year.

3. Governor Raimondo announces “Governor for a Day” essay contest

Governor Raimondo has announced the “Governor for a Day” essay contest as a way to encourage young girls to become

leaders in their communities. This Women's History Month initiative is open to girls in grades 5 through 8. The winning essayist will be named "Governor for a Day," and she will spend a day this spring meeting and speaking with other leaders across state government.

"Every day I talk with young girls and women – from my own daughter to successful Rhode Island businesswomen – and I am reminded how important it is to expose young girls to the significance of public service," Governor Raimondo said in announcing the contest. "Girls should know that with hard work and dedication, the opportunities available to them here in Rhode Island are endless. This essay contest is a chance to engage us all in that conversation."

Interested applicants should apply by **March 13** and by answering this question in 400 words or fewer:

What would you do if you were Rhode Island's Governor for a Day?

Students should submit the following information along with their essay:

- name
- age
- school
- grade
- teacher's contact information
- home address
- contact phone number
- contact email address
- parent or guardian name(s) and email(s)

Applicants may email their essays to:

communications@governor.ri.gov

Or they may mail their essays to:

Governor for a Day Essay Contest
C/O Governor's Communications Office
82 Smith Street, Room 128
Providence, R.I. 02903

From RIDE

Assessments: Alternate

**4. LEAs asked to review alternate-assessment student details
by March 13 – *Action Item***

You will now find a list of students who will be registered for the alternate assessment in your documents folder on District Exchange. Please review this list of students and work with the outplacement schools to validate these students by **March 13**. Any updates to your student list can be made on the Excel file; if you update your student list, mark the file as updated. After March 13, the compiled student-registration file will be imported into to the National Center and State Collaborative testing site.

Assessments: PARCC

5. LEAs asked to review results of RIDE validation of student records

We have completed a second validation of the PARCC student records against the records collected within eRIDE. This process is to ensure that the accountability reporting has the most accurate data possible and that you are provided with a precise representation of your student population. The results of this validation can be found in your document folder on [District Exchange](#). You must verify and update these records.

6. RIDE issues reminders regarding PARCC preparedness

Reminder: LEAs urged to perform infrastructure trials

Infrastructure trials are an important milestone in determining the technology readiness for the PARCC assessment. It has been determined that those LEAs that have performed infrastructure trials have had significantly fewer issues during the testing block than those LEAs that did not do an infrastructure trial. It is highly recommended that you perform at least one infrastructure trial. Pearson, the testing vendor for PARCC, has documentation regarding how to configure [Windows and Mac PCs](#), along with [mobile devices and Chromebooks](#). It is important to run an infrastructure trial, even if you have run one in the past, as the technology for PARCC testing is constantly being updated and enhanced. All of Pearson's documentation for the PARCC testing can be found at <http://parcc.pearson.com/technology-setup/>.

Reminder: RIDE to take snapshot of student registrations on March 14 – *Action Item*

On March 14, we will take a snapshot of your student registrations that will be used for accountability; this date has been moved back from the March 6 so as to reduce the number of data reviews for the LEAs. This snapshot will be used to validate

and clean the data for accountability reporting. It is critical that you ensure that your student registration data is as accurate as possible by **March 14**, especially the resolution of duplicates.

Reminder: Process for ordering additional PARCC materials now open

As students are enrolled in LEAs or as the needs of a student change, you may need to order additional paper material. This can be accomplished during the Additional Order window that began on Wednesday. In the [PARCC toolkit on District Exchange](#), you will find the Pearson and RIDE instructions regarding the process for ordering additional material during this window.

Reminder: Procedure in place for resolving issues regarding PARCC testing

Please call the Pearson call center first with any issues regarding PearsonAccessNext or PARCC testing. When you call, write down and keep track of the ticket number they assign to your incident. We have been working with the call center management to improve the experience and quality of the interaction with the call center agents. If you believe any incidents that are not resolved by the call center need to be escalated, contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.martin@ride.ri.gov. There is a process in place for Pearson to review these escalated incidents.

Reminder: Contact established for questions about PARCC technology preparedness

If you have any questions or concerns about PARCC technology preparedness, please contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.martin@ride.ri.gov or 222-8495.

Assessments: NECAP

7. NECAP Science test-coordinator training workshops scheduled

To help prepare district and school test coordinators for the NECAP Science test (May 4 through May 29), workshops have been scheduled for the following dates and times:

- April 14, at the Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St., Providence (1 – 3:00 p.m.)
- April 15, at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Rd., Warwick (9 – 11:00 a.m.)

(Note: Both cover the same material, so there is no need to attend both workshops.)

Registration for the workshops can be done online by going to <http://iregister.measuredprogress.org>, selecting “New England Common Assessment Program” from the drop-down menu, clicking “Enter” and selecting a workshop, and then following the online directions. On-site, in-person registration will also be available on the day of each workshop 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

Workshop attendance is strongly encouraged, as the latest information on NECAP testing policies and procedures as well as information about test security will be provided.

If you have any questions about these workshops, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov or 222-8494).

Data Collections and Data Quality:

8. Special education-related service personnel data is now collected in the PDC

In a continued effort to create efficiencies, RIDE will add the special education-related service personnel data collection to the Personnel Data Collection (PDC) system effective immediately. For this year, the PDC closes on June 30. This deadline will allow the collection of these data to be removed from the annual Consolidated Resource Plan application, thereby creating one collection for LEAs. We have continued to consolidate collections whenever possible. Moving this collection into the PDC will create one integrated system for all personnel data and will allow us to pull the necessary IDEA federal personnel reports from one source, the PDC. If you have questions about this change, please contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.Martin@ride.ri.gov, or David Sienko, at David.Sienko@ride.ri.gov.

9. RIDE issues reminders regarding data collection, data quality

LEAs reminded to update to SCED version 2.0

We have been monitoring the School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) version 2.0 migration in our Teacher-Course-Student data, and we still see some LEAs with version 1.0 codes coming in. These version 1.0 codes are integrated with the Instructional Support System, among other systems and resources that rely on the version 2.0 codes. LEAs are asked to update to SCED 2.0. If you have any questions or concerns about this version update,

please contact Greg Martin, at Gregory.martin@ride.ri.gov or 222-8495.

Reminder: Funding Formula collection data due March 16 – Action Item

Funding Formula Data will be pulled on Monday, March 16, at 9 a.m. Please make sure your LEAs calendar is up to date, including adjustments for snow days. The following fields in the Enrollment Census will be used for the funding formula: enroll_type, enroll_date, exit_date, lunch, and distCode_res. All duplicates need to be addressed.

Please review the Outside Enrollment file download (the second-to-last report in the Report Types dropdown) to ensure that your outplaced students are showing up correctly. For information on this report, please review the [Enrollment Census FAQ document](#). If you see records in your file that you believe are incorrect, or if there are missing records, please make sure you contact the other LEAs to resolve discrepancies.

Once the review of the data is complete, the following reports will need to be reviewed, signed, and submitted to RIDE: Snapshot, Submission, and State Calculated ADM. Due to the nature of these data, the reports will need to be pulled during a specific timeframe on the March 16 that we will set at a later date. The [Calculating ADM document](#) explains how the Average Daily Membership is calculated for the reports.

If you have any questions about Funding formula data, please enter a helpdesk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

Reminder: Textbook-collection data due March 27 – Action Item

Each year, RIDE collects and distributes a listing of textbooks used in all public schools. The purpose of this list is to meet the requirements of General Laws 16-23-2 and 16-23-3, which provide for the loan of textbooks in the areas of mathematics, science, foreign language, English-language arts, and history/social studies grades K-12 to nonpublic schools in Rhode Island.

LEAs are required to submit a complete listing of all textbooks planned for use during the 2014-15 academic year to RIDE using eRIDE (www.eride.ri.gov). The Textbook List Upload module within eRIDE is an electronic process through which districts must manage their textbook lists by adding and deleting titles and pertinent information. Instructions for the use of the eRIDE system, including detailed information about uploading textbook titles and ISBN numbers are attached.

All LEAs must update the complete list of textbooks currently in use by **March 27**. Once we have received updates from all school districts, the information will be aggregated and posted to the RIDE website.

Any inquiries regarding the program should be addressed to Lauren McCarthy, at 222-8463 or lauren.mccarthy@ride.ri.gov. If there are technical issues regarding the use of eRIDE, please submit a helpdesk ticket, at <https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

Educator Recognition:

10. RIDE seeking nominations for 2015-16 District Teachers of the Year

The 2014-15 District Teacher of the Year profile sheet has been posted on the Educator Recognition page of the RIDE website. District Teacher of the Year Profile Sheets are due by **May 1**. This year, 31 teachers from across Rhode Island represented their individual LEAs as District Teachers of the Year. Each District Teacher of the Year (DTOY) also had the opportunity to take part in WaterFire: A Salute to Rhode Island Educators, to participate in leadership professional development, to collaborate with DTOYs from across the state, and to apply to represent all Rhode Island educators as the 2016 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year.

Please visit our Educator Recognition page or click on the following link to download the 2015-16 District Teacher of the Year Profile Sheet:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/DTOY_2016_Application

If you have any questions regarding the District Teacher of the Year program, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov or 222-8497.

Food Programs:

11. RIDE accepting elementary-school applicants for USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

RIDE is pleased to announce the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for 2015-16. Currently, there are 88 schools in 17 districts and an additional 9 independent schools and RCCIs that participate in the program.

The goal of the program is to encourage children to try new fruits and vegetables and to increase the amount of fresh fruits and

vegetables in their daily diet. This program is seen as an important catalyst for change in efforts to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits.

According to the USDA guidance school-eligibility criteria set forth in section 19 of the National School Lunch Act, all participating schools must:

- be elementary schools beginning in school year 2015-16;
- represent the highest percentage of students certified for free and reduced-price benefits;
- participate in the National School Lunch Program; and
- complete an annual application for the FFVP.

Please note: Although the Federal Grant supporting this program is generous, it is not unlimited. Therefore, we may not be able to fund all eligible schools. Priority will be given to schools with the highest free and reduced-price enrollment.

If selected, your school(s) would receive a minimum of \$50 per student to purchase and provide fresh produce during the school day, unrelated to the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

Applications are due to RIDE by Friday, **March 31**. The application process has an aggressive timeline to ensure that contracts are in place prior to the end of this school year, and schools will be able to access the FFVP funds in September.

We have sent application materials to the principals of your elementary schools as well as to business managers, food-service directors, and school nurses.

From the U.S. Department of Education

12. Fulbright-Hayes Seminars Abroad program to support study in China for U.S. educators

Please see this message from the U.S. Department of Education International and Foreign Language Education Office:

The Seminars Abroad (SA) Program supports short-term study and travel abroad for U.S. educators for the purpose of improving their understanding and knowledge of the peoples and cultures of other countries. The program is open to U.S. educators and administrators at the K-12 level. For the Fiscal Year 2015 competition, we are offering a seminar to China, administered through a contractual agreement with the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (NCUSCR).

The Fiscal Year 2015 Seminars application package is available at www.g5.gov. The due date for submitting applications is **April 1**. For additional program information, please go to:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/index.html>

A Seminars Abroad Competition webinar will be offered **tomorrow** (Saturday, March 7), at noon.

To register go to:

<https://educate.webex.com/educate/j.php?RGID=r7786b20778828e93310ce7f85ed66494>

Once the host approves your request, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions in order to join the webinar tomorrow.

For audio, you must call in to the conference call line below. (Please note: Audio will not be provided if you just log onto the webinar using the information above.).

Dial the Access Phone Number: [888-989-4712](tel:888-989-4712).

When prompted, dial the access code: 6256310.

If you have questions once the webinar begins please contact Carla.white@ed.gov.

For additional information on how to apply to the program, please go to:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/index.html>

13. Software available to help create, revise emergency plans

Please see this message from the U.S. Department of Education:

To help school administrators and emergency-management personnel create or revise their emergency-operations plans (EOPs), the U.S. Department of Education-funded Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical

Assistance Center issued a free, web-accessible software application: [EOP ASSIST](#). The application walks users through a six-step process for creating and downloading a customized school EOP.

From other organizations

14. RIASCD conference scheduled for March 27

Please see this notice from the Rhode Island ASCD:

With limited resources, many districts are no longer able to send practitioners long distances to learn from world-class presenters. The NEASCD (formerly held in Boston each year) is coming to the New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich.

RIASCD is launching a new kind of professional development that addresses these needs: [ASCD EdSpace](#). Focusing on targeted content, useful skills and strategies, un-conferencing principles, and web technologies, this format delivers a new professional development experience for educators. Most importantly, this is not cookie-cutter PD. ASCD EdSpace will look different wherever it is offered, based on the needs and interests of educators in the region.

Piloted by North Carolina ASCD this past November, this ASCD EdSpace format uses a hybrid of virtual and face-to-face collaboration with built-in flexibility so that participants get what they want out of the experience. Five ASCD Affiliates from the northeast United States are planning a larger scale, live hybrid event to take place on Friday, **March 27**. ASCD's Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island,

and Vermont affiliates are bringing in [Doug Fisher](#) and [Nancy Frey](#) virtually to work with educators on the ground in their respective states in real time, learning about and collaborating around their FIT teaching model.

[FIT Teaching](#) (the Framework for Intentional and Targeted Teaching) is an approach to instruction that ensures high-quality teaching through school and classroom culture, established purpose, gradual release of responsibility, and formative and summative assessments. It also assists educators in offering descriptive and actionable feedback while using classroom data to inform targeted instruction. It is a rich, meaningful, actionable approach that empowers educators to successfully meet the challenges in today's climate of educational accountability.

To register for the conference, go to www.riascd.org.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/CommissionerDeborahAGist/FieldMemos.aspx>